# TOTNES

# Rural District Council.

## ANNUAL REPORT

OF

## Mr. Henry Sandford Johnson,

**Medical Officer of Health,**

FOR THE YEAR 1900.

Mortimer, Bros., Totnes.

# TO THE TOTNES

# Rural District Council.

Annual Report on the Sanitary state of the District for the year ending December 31st, 1900.

GENTLEMEN,

I have again the pleasure of laying my annual report before you, and in it you will, as usual, find a resume of the general health of the district, the number of cases of zymotic diseases reported, also the number of births and deaths, as well as the principal sanitary works carried out during the year 1900.

The district is, as you are aware, divided into two districts for the purposes of sanitary work. No 1 district comprises the parishes of Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Cornworthy, Churston Ferrers, Dartington, Dittisham, Halwell, Harberton, Morley, Marldon, Littlehempston, Kingswear and Stoke Gabriel; the population of the combined parishes according to the census of 1891 being 7,400 and the acreage 32,231 acres. Mr. Tollit is the Sanitary Inspector for this district.

No. 2 district comprises the parishes of Buckfastleigh (West), Diptford, Dean Prior, Holne, Rattery, North Huish, Staverton, South Brent, and Ugborough. This district includes the Plymouth Borough Asylum, situated at Blackadon, Ugborough, and the population, according to the census of 1891 is 5,904, and the acreage 44,750. Mr. Ellis is the Sanitary Inspector for this district, the combined population of the two districts being 13,304, and the combined acreage 76,981 acres. The population of the Plymouth Borough Asylum is 320, and which this year I take as a separate district.

DEATHS.—During the year 1900 there were registered 164 deaths, exclusive of Plymouth Borough Asylum, where 21 deaths occurred. These figures give a death rate of 12.6 per 1,000 of the population of the former, whilst that of the latter is 65.6, which is not abnormally high considering the class of residents. The greatest number of deaths took place in the months of January, March and September, when 19, 22, and 19 deaths were registered respectively, and the smallest number in August, November and December, when only 5, 8, and 8 were respectively registered, the latter being a marked difference to the corresponding month of 1899, when 25 were registered.

Under 1 year 32 deaths were registered; from the 1st to the 5th year, 10; from the 5th to the 15th year, 5; from the 15th to the 25th, 7; from the 25th to the 65th, 44; and from the 65th year upwards,68.

The deaths were classified as follows:—Measles, 1; diphtheria, 6; enteric fever, 2; epidemic influenza, 3; diarrhœa, 2; enteritis, 3; puerperal fever, 1; phthisis, 9; other tubercular diseases, 5; cancer, 6; bronchitis, 18; pneumonia, 7; premature birth, 7; diseases and accidents of parturition, 2; heart disease, 24; accidents, 5; suicides, 3; all other diseases, 60—164.

In the Plymouth Borough Asylum the deaths were classified:—Phthisis, 3; other tubercular diseases, 4; pleurisy, 1; all other diseases, 13—21.

As required by the Local Government Board I append the number of deaths in each Registration District:—

| | Under 1 year | At all ages |
|---|---|---|
| Dartmouth ..... | 2 | 16 |
| Buckfastleigh ..... | 1 | 18 |
| Brixham ..... | 0 | 6 |
| Totnes ..... | 6 | 20 |
| Ugborough ..... | 12 | 53 |
| Paignton ..... | 4 | 14 |
| Harberton ..... | 7 | 37 |
| | 32 | 164 |

It will thus be seen that Ugborough and Harberton have the largest number, both of infantile deaths, as well as those of all ages, but then it must be taken into consideration that they are the largest and most populous districts.

The deaths in the Plymouth Borough Asylum were all under the heading at all ages.

The number of deaths from the combined districts together with the Plymouth Borough Asylum, numbers 185, or 12 more than in 1899, when 173 occurred, but the average length of life is better this year, as 37 more have lived past the 65th year than in 1899. It will be seen that 10 deaths occurred from diseases classified under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act. This is in excess of 1899, when only four were registered, but this is attributable to an epidemic of diphtheria, which visited some of the parishes during the autumn of the year, and which will be explained later on in my report.

BIRTHS.—During the year the births of 256 children were registered, 131 males and 125 females. I append the number in each registration district:—

| | Males. | Females. | Tl. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dartmouth ..... | 16 | 9 | 25 |
| Buckfastleigh ..... | 11 | 15 | 26 |
| Brixham ..... | 4 | 9 | 13 |
| Totnes ..... | 14 | 13 | 27 |
| Ugborough ..... | 59 | 35 | 94 |
| Paignton ..... | 6 | 14 | 20 |
| Harberton ..... | 21 | 30 | 51 |
| | 131 | 125 | 256 |

It will be seen from the above that Ugborough and Harberton districts have the largest number of births, as well as the largest number of deaths.

Under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, 52 cases were reported, viz.—Diphtheria, 25; scarlet fever, 17; enteric fever, 3; erysipelas, 4; puerperal fever, 3. Of the 25 cases of diphtheria, 12 cases occurred in the parish of Rattery, in the Harberton Registration District. The first case was traced to an insanitary closet and an untrapped drain, and the other cases were no doubt contracted from it chiefly through the medium of persons going from one house to another, and carrying the infection

The first case occurred in an isolated part of the parish where there were only five houses. I immediately visited the place on receipt of notice, and ordered all children from the houses to be kept from school, and gave instructions as to disinfectants and isolation, but as the disease appeared in other parts of the parish, I advised closing all schools, which was immediately done, and which no doubt prevented its further spread. That the disease was of a severe type is proved by the fact that no less than five cases terminated fatally.

At Dartington, in the Totnes Registration District, five cases were notified. This parish adjoins the parish of Rattery, and although I have been unable to trace the infection being carried from the latter parish, it is very likely it was, although in the first case, I found on my visit a very dirty closet, and accumulation of offal close to the back door of the house. The other cases were distinctly traced to infection being carried from this case, and which, I regret to say, proved fatal; the other four cases were mild. I thought it advisable to close the schools, and every sanitary precaution was taken to prevent the further spread of the disease. Three cases at South Brent were very mild, and occurred at different times of the year, and did not assume an epidemic form. Two cases in Ugborough were distinctly traced to have been caught from one of the South Brent cases, as the children had their meals in the same house. The two cases at Kingswear, in the Dartmouth Registration District, were extremely mild, as was one at Staverton, in the Buckfastleigh Registration District, and no other case took place from them.

There were notified 17 cases of scarlet fever, eight of which took place at Ugborough, in the Registration District of the same name. They were very mild, and no death took place, but as there were several suspicious cases in the parish, I considered it advisable to close the schools, and seven cases were notified at the village of Harberton, in the Harberton Registration District, three of which took place in the same house, and the others were isolated cases, and did not assume an epidemic form. One mild case occurred at Galmpton, and one at

Stoke Gabriel. The three cases of enteric fever notified are considerably less than in 1899, when 10 cases were notified, although, I regret to say, two out of the three terminated fatally, but these cases were when the disease was preceded by pneumonia; one case occurred in Ugborough parish, one at Harberton, and one at Buckfastleigh (West).

Three cases of puerperal fever were notified—One at Stoke Gabriel, in the Registration District of Paignton, and was caused by smell from a dirty privy; one at Holne, in the Buckfastleigh Registration District, and one at South Brent, in the Ugborough district; both the latter, as far as I can learn, from inattention at time of labour. The four cases of erysipelas notified were very mild, and occurred in different parts of the district.

I would point out that the outbreak of diphtheria occurred in the last two months of the year and was confined to the parishes of Rattery and Dartington, that those attacked first were the most serious cases, and that other districts in South Devon were similarly attacked at the same time.

Influenza was very prevalent in the early part of the year, but only three deaths occurred from it.

DAIRIES.—The dairies have been regularly inspected, and in all cases have been found clean and well ventilated, the only difficulty in regard to them being that meat and other food stuffs are stored in them, a very reprehensible practice.

COWHOUSES.—These have also been regularly inspected, and as a rule were found in a sanitary condition.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.—These have also been regularly inspected, and have, as a rule, been kept in a good sanitary condition.

COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.—These are, on the whole, fairly good. Some few cases of overcrowding having been reported, but were abated on service of the usual notice.

WATER SUPPLY.—This has held fairly well during the year, although some of the parishes suffered during the months of August and September. The hamlet of Scorriton, in the parish of

Buckfastleigh (West), suffered most in this respect, and is very much in need of an augmented supply, as is the village of Halwell, where the supply consists of one pump only.

The following were the most important improvements during the year:—

## No. 1 DISTRICT.

ASHPRINGTON.—Storage of water increased at Tuckenhay village.

DITTISHAM.—New drain laid in Capton village; a great improvement.

KINGSWEAR.—Low level reservoir re-cemented.

MORLEY.—Storage of water increased.

STOKE GABRIEL.—Water supply extended to several parts of the village. I would recommend in this district that the school closets at Cornworthy have an increased supply of water for flushing, as in dry weather they are a nuisance.

DITTISHAM.—Drainage ought to be extended to the schools, and connected with closets.

## No. 2 DISTRICT.

HOLNE.—School closets connected with sewer, and flushed automatically, as are also the closets from the Hotel.

STAVERTON.—Drain laid at Sparkwell cottages.

SOUTH BRENT.—Several new sewers have been laid and connected, and some objectionable yards properly paved.

UGBOROUGH.—New sewers laid in village and Lutterbourne Pond filled in, and water carried away in properly constructed culvert.

A large cesspit constructed in the hamlet of Filham.

The water supply, to increase that at Bittaford village is in progress.

In addition to the above several minor improvements have been carried out.

Several applications for the occupation of new houses have been received, and where the sanitary arrangements and water supply were satisfactory have been granted.

There were no prosecutions.

Many samples of water were tested during the year.

I have, in company with the Sanitary Inspectors, at stated intervals, visited every parish in the districts, and reported anything requiring the attention of the Council.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY S. JOHNSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Buckfastleigh, February 23rd, 1901.